

3 Project Activities

3.1 Gathering Of County Stakeholder Information

3.1.1 Description of Activity

For each of the ten counties in the Eastern Tier consortium, various pieces of communications-related information were gathered. Some of this information was gathered by the county representatives sitting on the ETIC Board, some of it was gathered by employees of the radio shops used by the counties, and some of it by the Project Manager. This information includes:

- A list of relevant county stakeholders. County stakeholders are those persons or agencies operating within the county who have a stake in communications interoperability.
- Questionnaires given to and filled out by county stakeholders.
- Letter of support from the county stakeholders.
- Physical surveys of all the existing radio sites in the county.

3.1.2 Potential Candidate Stakeholder List

To aid in the creation of each county's stakeholder list, the following potential stakeholder list was created. Please note that not all of the agencies and entities on this list will be applicable in all counties. The list was created simply to aid people in identifying those stakeholders of interest in their county.

County Level – To Be Contacted By The County Representatives

1. Local Law Enforcement Agencies
 - A. County Sheriffs
 - B. City Police Departments
2. Local Public Safety/Emergency Responders
 - A. EMS (public and private)
 - B. City Fire Departments
 - C. Rural and/or Volunteer Fire Departments
 - D. Search and Rescue Teams
 - E. Airport Security
 - F. County-level DES
3. Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies
4. City/County Works
5. Juvenile Probation (District Courts)
6. County Public Health Reps.
7. Local Sanitarians
8. County Commissioners



9. City/County Utilities (electricity, gas)
10. Broadcast Radio Stations
11. Coroner
12. Amateur Radio Operators
13. Railroad (remember Alberton Gorge and the Helena railroad explosion of 1989)
14. Civil Air Patrol (better to deal with these folks locally, or at most, regionally, as those who participate in local search and rescue are local, private pilots.)
15. Schools (remember Columbine)
16. Radio Shops
17. Agencies in bordering counties not in the ETIC.
18. Representatives from bordering states, as appropriate.

Multi-County Level

1. Other interoperability radio consortiums, such as NTIC, Big Sky 11, and Lewis & Clark County.
2. District DES
3. Drug Task Forces
4. DUI Task Forces
5. Adult Parole & Probation Regional Administrators (Dept. of Corrections)

State Level

1. Montana Army National Guard (Military Affairs)
2. Montana State-level DES
3. Montana Department of Justice
 - A. Highway Patrol
 - B. Criminal Investigations Bureau
 - C. Narcotics Investigation Bureau
 - D. Fire Prevention & Investigations Bureau
 - E. Gambling Investigations Bureau
4. Montana Department of Transportation (including District Administrator)
5. DPHHS Public Health
6. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
7. Montana Department of Corrections, including prison, juvenile parole, and adult parole and probation
8. Montana Department of Livestock
9. Montana DEQ

Multi-State Level

Example: Missouri River Drug Task Force



Federal/International Level

1. Customs
2. US DOT
3. Red Cross
4. DEA
5. INS
6. FBI
7. US Marshals Service
8. US Probation
9. BLM
10. Border Patrol
11. US Forest Service
12. US National Parks Service
13. FEMA
14. Canada

3.1.3 Questionnaire Template

The following is the Questionnaire that was distributed to county stakeholders for them to fill out and return.

Instructions: Please fill out this information to the best of your ability, contacting other people or agencies as needed. There may be some overlap in the answers to some questions.

Section 1: General Information

Name of Agency:

Location of Agency:

Date of Interview or Survey Completion:

Persons Present And Agencies/Entities Represented:

Section 2: Questions

1. Number of Channels? Half-Duplex? Full-Duplex?

2. List the frequencies your agency currently uses and how each is used. (Send/Receive, Fire, EMS, LE, etc.)

3. Coverage

- A. Approximately what percentage of your jurisdictional area is adequately covered? For the purposes of this question, adequate means coverage is sufficient to get the job done.**
- B. How acceptable is that coverage? Are you happy with the “adequate” coverage you described in question 1? For example, you may only have 95% coverage, but that may be quite acceptable, since the area(s) not covered aren’t important.**
- C. If unacceptable, why? (Severe terrain, Gaps, Antenna patterns, In-building problems, etc.)**
- D. If acceptable, would an improvement still be desired? Why?**
- E. Do you have mobile-to-mobile coverage countywide? If not, do you need it?**

4. Current Loading

- A. Number of Mobile Units**
- B. Number of Portable Units**

5. Any units currently P25 capable/enabled? Which ones?

6. Dispatch

- A. How is dispatch currently conducted?**
- B. From where?**

C. Hardware used?

D. Number of positions?

E. Adequate? If not, why? How could it be improved?

7. Sharing of System

A. Is your system currently being shared?

B. Which parts and with whom?

8. What is good about your current system?

9. What are the issues, problems, or challenges with your current system not already covered above? (Examples (but don't limit yourselves to these): Coordination issues with other agencies, coverage, encryption, channel congestion, current interoperability problems, legal restrictions or obstructions, obsolete and/or aging equipment.) Please be honest, but try to avoid inflammatory or "blaming" words.

10. What other agencies do you need to communicate with?

A. On a day-to-day (administrative) basis

B. On an emergency basis

11. Please describe your radio communications during typical day-to-day (administrative) activities and during emergencies.

12. List, in priority order, up to five (5) communications improvements needed from initial dispatch to call completion. (Examples: Call alert, paging to units, encryption, countywide mobile-to-mobile coverage, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

13. List, in priority order, up to five (5) factors that will be critical to future radio systems in your county, city, or area of jurisdiction. (Examples, but don't limit yourself to these: Flexibility, Affordability, Reliability, Redundancy, Simplicity, Maintainability, Education, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

14. Please use this space to add any items or comments which you would like to make that have not been covered above. Again, please be honest, but try to avoid inflammatory or "blaming" words.



3.1.4 Sample Letter Of Support

The following is the template Letter Of Support which was distributed to the county stakeholders:

January 02, 2005

Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium
Chief Alan Michaels, Acting Coordinator
P.O. Box 1372
Glendive, MT 59330

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Your Group/Company/Agency Name in support of the Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium Project. This project is critical to the community, and to the area service providers that use communications for the people they serve.

We anticipate that the cost of this project is substantial. As such, funding from federal and other sources must be secured in order to accomplish the project. (*Maybe state how emergency communications affects your company/agency*).

Our group/company/agency looks forward to participating in this project. Our goal is to work together with our Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium toward a reliable interoperable communications system.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Group/Company/Agency Name

Your Address

Your City, State Zip

3.2 County Stakeholder Meetings

3.2.4 Description of Activity

As part of the *Needs Assessment* phase, the county representatives and Project Manager met face-to-face with as many of the county stakeholders as was possible. Sometimes the county representatives met with the stakeholders without the Project Manager, and sometimes the Project Manager met with stakeholders without the county representatives. But there was at least one meeting held in each of the ten counties that included both the county representative and the Project Manager.

Prior to the meeting with the Project Manager, all identified county stakeholders were given a questionnaire to fill out. These were to be, ideally, completed and returned to the county representative before the meeting with the Project Manager. Sometimes this was able to be done and sometimes it was not, due to schedules and other duties.

During these meetings, stakeholders were asked to describe their most pressing issues. In addition, any questions they might have had concerning the questionnaire were raised and answered. Technical questions sometimes arose about radios, trunking, and P25 compatibility. These questions were answered to the best of the ability of those present.

In some previous interoperability projects in Montana, only Law Enforcement was included in the meetings and was given questionnaires to fill out. In subsequent phases, additional stakeholders such as Fire, Ambulance, and Search & Rescue were added to the list of stakeholders. In the Eastern Tier, one of the goals was to include as many stakeholders as possible in the first round of the project, so that all needs could be heard and considered.



3.2.5 Typical Meeting Agenda

Each meeting in each county was a little different than the others. In general, the Project Manager led the meeting, but allowed the participants to talk about the things they felt were important. In general, the meetings lasted from two to three hours, and very roughly followed this agenda:

Opening Remarks – Quick Review of ETIC Purpose & Goals	10 minutes
County Representative	
Welcome, Introductions	10 minutes
Project Manager	
Comments, Issues, and Questions From Stakeholders	70 minutes
Stakeholders	
Break	10 minutes
Comments, Issues, and Questions From Stakeholders (cont.)	65 minutes
Stakeholders	
Wrap Up: Next Steps, Homework, Action Items	15 minutes
Project Manager	

3.3 Site Surveys

3.3.4 Description of Activity

In each of the ten counties, all of the sites currently being used by the stakeholders were surveyed by the radio shops, which services those stakeholders. These surveys were an abbreviated version of the comprehensive survey done when equipment is actually going to be installed or proposed to be installed.

The two radio shops used for the surveys were East-Mont Communications, Inc., in Miles City, and TAB Electronics in Glendive.

3.4 Preliminary Design

Working with the people from the radio shops who work in the ten-county Eastern Tier area, along with consultations with persons familiar with efforts being made in the Northern Tier consortium, the project team developed a preliminary design for a new P25-compliant, trunked system.

A large number of simplifying assumptions had to be made in order to come up with the preliminary design and cost estimate. These numbers should be considered a rough order of magnitude only.

3.5 Other Materials Given To ETIC County Representatives

3.5.4 Checklist

In order to help the county representatives with their data-gathering tasks, the following checklist was created:

1. Using the *Candidate Stakeholders In Local Communications Interoperability* document as a starting point, create yourself a list of all the potential stakeholders relevant to your county, including those above the county level (multi-county, state, multi-state, federal). List them by their real names (e.g. “Glendive PD” instead of “Local PD”). We’ll call this your *Potential List of County Stakeholders*. Assign each stakeholder on your list a level:
 - A. Mandatory (can’t succeed without them).
 - B. Important (can still succeed, but these people really need to be involved).
 - C. Desirable (would really like for these people to be involved, but not essential).
 - D. Nice To Have (not really necessary, certainly not essential. If they participate, great. If not, fine.).

Forward a copy of this list to the Project Manager. Throughout the project, keep the PM updated with a new list if it changes.

2. Identify all the county-level stakeholders. We’ll call this your *Actual List of County Stakeholders*. (The Project Manager and/or others will contact state and federal stakeholders.) Contact all the stakeholders on your *Actual List of County Stakeholders*. Forward a copy of this list to the Project Manager. Throughout the project, keep the PM updated with a new list if it changes.

For each stakeholder:

- A. Let them know what it is we are doing, if they don’t already know.
- B. Let them know what our goals are, if they don’t already know.
- C. Give all of them a copy of the document describing the motivation and goals of the project.
- D. Let them know who else is being asked to be involved, if they don’t already know.
- E. Let them know what it is we are asking from all stakeholders:
 - i. Fill out the questionnaire.

- ii. Assemble the results from any previous studies, including, but not limited to coverage maps, future plans (approved and in the works), past studies of needs, etc. Make sure they give you copies of this material and not originals. We don't want to lose their originals.
 - iii. Existing agreements in place between this stakeholder and any others, including other county agencies, multi-county, state, multi-state, and federal. If something is not in a written format, ask them to put in some written form, summarizing and/or outlining it. Make sure they give you copies of this material and not originals. We don't want to lose their originals.
 - iv. Existing emergency plans, Master Communications Plans, SOPs, ICSs, etc. If something is not in a written format, ask them to put in some written form, summarizing and/or outlining it. Make sure they give you copies of this material and not originals. We don't want to lose their originals.
 - v. Results from previous Site Surveys which are still accurate, even if now incomplete because of additions to the site. If any changes or additions are known, briefly note them on the existing survey or another piece of paper. Make sure they give you copies of this material and not originals. We don't want to lose their originals.
 - vi. A letter of support for the consortium and its goals.
 - vii. Active participation in the project by coming to ETIC meetings, contributing material, providing input and feedback.
 - F. Give them the questionnaire. Ask them to have the questionnaire completed before they (and you) meet with the Project Manager in the face-to-face meeting(s). Give them a deadline for returning the questionnaires to you.
 - G. Ask them to please be very honest when describing issues and problems, but to try to avoid inflammatory and "blaming" words.
 - H. Some counties have found it useful to hold a stakeholder meeting before meeting with the Project Manager. If you feel that will be helpful, please do so.
 - I. Let them know when you are going to be meeting face-to-face with the Project Manager. If the actual date of the meeting has not been set, give them an estimated timeframe for the meeting.
3. Get with the Project Manager to coordinate trip(s) to talk to stakeholders face to face.
- A. Determine what you believe to be the best way to organize your meeting(s). By function (Law Enforcement separate from Fire separate from EMS, etc.), all stakeholders in the same room at once, a combination of both, etc.
 - B. Establish the date and time for the first trip. Agenda: Meet each other, discuss project, discuss Questionnaires, answer questions, etc.
 - C. Reserve meeting room, if necessary.
 - D. Send out invitations to all stakeholders.
 - E. Determine what to do about lunch, if the meeting will cross over that time period. A close-by cafe works, or bringing food in and asking people to contribute to help pay for it works as well.

4. As the Questionnaires are returned:
 - A. Check that they have been completely filled out. If they have not, contact the person responsible for the task and ask them to complete it as necessary.
 - B. Check that non-inflammatory words have been used when describing issues or problems. If inflammatory words have been used, contact the person who filled out the questionnaire and ask them how we might rephrase it so it's not inflammatory.
 - C. If the questionnaires have been returned in electronic form, forward them to the Project Manager. If they are returned in hardcopy form, mail them to the Project Manager if there is enough time to get them to him/her before he/she comes out for the face-to-face stakeholder meetings. If there is not enough time, hold onto them until he/she arrives.
 - D. Forward any additional materials (previous surveys, plans, etc.) to the Project Manager.
 - E. If you want to keep copies of any of this material, please make them before giving them to the Project Manager.

3.6 Non-County Stakeholders

In addition to stakeholders within the counties, several state or federal stakeholders were contacted as well. It is believed that these stakeholders are also important to include in the process. In many emergency situations, such as a forest or grassland fire, communication with these non-county stakeholders is extremely critical.